

COUNTRY Germany (Western Zones)

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SUBJECT Meeting of the Zonal KPD Directorate in Mainz

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SUPPLEMENT TO

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1. The KPD Zonal Directorate met at its office at Uferstrasse, Mainz, on 22 November 1948 to discuss the result of the Rheinland-Pfalz communal elections of 14 November 1948, and to receive new instructions concerning the general line and zonal policy of the KPD. Present were twelve members of the Zonal Directorate, a number of top functionaries of the KPD in Rheinland-Pfalz, and two non-residents of Rheinland-Pfalz who were identified to the others only as "Adolf" and "Fritz." "Adolf's" accent indicated that he came from the Ruhr area. He is about 6 ft. tall, approximately 45 years old, is well-dressed, and wears a gold ring with a blue stone. Important zonal and land personalities present were Niebergall, Prinz, Baumgartner, Feller (former Minister of Reconstruction in Rheinland-Pfalz, now editor of the Communist paper Neues Leben), and the KPD Land organization treasurer known as "Werner" (probably an assumed name, source believes). "Werner" comes from eastern Germany. He has no fixed residence, living sometimes with Prinz in Mainz/Monbach, sometimes with Baumgartner in Ludwigshafen. He very often visits France. He has a DKW car of the Meisterklasse model with a Hesse license number.
2. Otto Niebergall spoke at the morning session and evaluated the election results for the KPD. He declared that the Zonal Directorate had counted on a decrease in Communist votes and it was agreeably surprised that the Party could more or less hold its position in the elections of 14 November 1948. He sharply criticized the attitude of Neues Leben which, through a number of "stupid articles", had repelled the voters instead of attracting them. The election result, Niebergall said, has proved once more that the KPD under the given conditions cannot count on being a huge mass movement, but must make every effort to develop into an outspoken cadre movement. Principal activity should be shifted even more than before to the factories and enterprises, since a careful analysis of election results shows that young workers in the enterprises voted Communist in relatively high numbers. Niebergall violently criticized the organizational and propagandistic work of a considerable number of local groups; he said he had discovered that in many cases local functionaries had neglected to distribute propaganda material which had been delivered to them. He also reproached the sub-district leaders with having failed to inform the Zonal Directorate properly about popular opinion and reaction throughout the zone and complained that his own attempts to activate the sub-districts and local functionaries to improve their reporting to the Zonal Directorate have failed. He concluded by pointing out the main lesson of the Rheinland-Pfalz elections: the Party there has lost its meaning as a mass organization and in the future must distribute its functions differently than before.

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3. During Niebergall's speech a clash occurred between him and W. Feller, when the latter interrupted Niebergall and reproached him for having disorganized the Party rather than having organized it. "Adolf" intervened and quieted the excitement caused by Feller's interruption. After Niebergall concluded his speech, "Adolf" addressed the functionaries and stated that the Rheinland-Pfalz election result, so far as the KPD is concerned, is normal under the given conditions. Similar results have occurred in Nordrhein-Westfalen. He supported Niebergall's request to increase the development of cadre organizations. He explained that in future locally-known functionaries will be entrusted with only overt functions and will work merely to increase propaganda. All other Party functions and assignments will in future have to be assumed by a limited number of absolutely reliable Party functionaries not engaged in local work. There followed a discussion of the difficulties of activating the work among the crews of factories and enterprises. "Fritz" reproached the Rheinland-Pfalz and zonal leadership with having failed to advance social agitation in the factories and enterprises. The main object of such agitation should be the creation and maintenance of unrest, disaffection, and a permanent psychosis of fear of an uncertain future among the workers. This fear should be spread primarily among the younger workers, through whom it would soon spread to older workers.
4. "Adolf", "Fritz", Niebergall, Prinz, Baumgartner, Feller, and the treasurer "Werner" then retired to a closed meeting to deal with Party financial affairs. The other functionaries were told by Niebergall only that since a proper accounting of the local groups and sub-districts and proper financial relations between them and the Zonal Directorate have not been possible, the whole financial organization of the Party would be changed.
5. In an afternoon session of the same group "Fritz" spoke on the situation in western Germany. He struck a new note which may be of importance for the general attitude of the KPD since, Source feels, apparently "Fritz's" position in the Party is higher than zonal level. He said that the Communists in the French Zone have reason to expect aid and support from the French Communists; he did not specify the nature of such aid. He further declared that the French Zone Communists should consider their zone as a sort of wedge against expansion of American influence in western Germany and western Europe, and he requested the assembled functionaries to decrease their eagerness with respect to a trizonal merger. Communists in the French Zone would of course not expect popular understanding and support if they openly pointed out these conditions. Therefore, they should subtly point out in press and propaganda that keeping up the zonal borders would make easier the fight against the capitalistic policy and economy of the bizonal Frankfurt administration. Maintaining the French zonal borders would also prevent penetration by the Americans of the police organization - both French and German - in the zone. The French police in the zone now is inefficient and penetrated with Gaullist elements of whom some are still in contact with Communists because of their former cooperation in the resistance movement. For all of these reasons the Communists would have much more influence on the development of western Europe and would be in better position to strengthen their ties with the Communist Party of France, if the French Zone were kept out of the trizonal combination.
6. There was no discussion of "Fritz's" remarks. Feller interrupted him at one point to ask how the French Zone Communists could possibly assimilate this new zonal policy with their past attitude. "Fritz" brushed away Feller's objection by asking, "Since when have Communists been concerned about their past attitude?"

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